foreign launch vehicles. Parllelly, development of Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) to launch Indian National Satellite-II (INSAT-II) class of satellites has been under progress. In the first developmental flight is expected in 1998-99. GSLV is expected to be operational by the end of the decade. From then on, it is expected that India will be self-sufficient in launching all its satellites by its own launchers.

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*WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS SET FOR THE 19TH NOVEMBER, 1997

Aircraft accidents

*1. SHRI GYAN RANJAN:
SHRI RAM GOPAL YADAV:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to newsitem captioned "Accident rate in IAF becoming cause for concern" published in the Asian Age date 30th June, 1997;

(b) whether the Committee set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Defence Research to analyse comparative aircraft accident data, in India and abroad, has since submitted its report; and

(c) if so, what are the main features thereof and what action Government have taken or propose to take on the recommendations of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Committee has made 84 recommendations. These recommendations have been made to achieve minimise accident rate. Implementation of these recommendations would need changes in organisational structure, procedures, training, design, technology, etc. While some of the recommendations are an in-house exercise involving negligible financial implications and can be effected by the concerned organisations without much loss of time, implementation/processing of other recommendations will take time and also involve expenditure. The recommendations of the Committee are under examination.

Pak Shelling on Border

*2. SHRI NARENDER MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that during his visit to border areas recently, Pakistani forces started shelling and he had to react on the shelling immediately before the Army;

(b) how many times and on how many days Pakistan has shelled Indian villages during the last six months and what are the casualities on Indian side and how Indian Army has retaliated to it; and

(c) whether they have been permitted to retaliate or they were restrained?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI MULAYAM SINGH YADAD): (a) to (c) The Raksha Mantri visited Siachen Glacier and Kargil on 26/27 September, 1997. While he was at a forward post in Siachen area, there was firing by Pakistani troops in the nearby area. The concerned Army formation responded appropriately. Firing by Pakistani troops in Siachen area and Line of Control is a routine phenomenon. The Indian Army has been responding adequately to the Pakistani firing.

There are a large number of villages all along the Line of Control and the IB portion of J&K. This year, on two occasions Pakistani troops have specifically targetted Kargil town and adjacent villages in April 1997 and September 1997.

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*The sitting of the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday the 19th November, 1997 wad adjourned without transacting any business. Answers to Questions puyt down in the lists for that day were laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, the 20th November, 1997.